

Office of Vital Registration

Corrections to Death Certificates:

Corrections to a death certificate, other than corrections to medical information, may be requested by the **informant** or any **immediate family member**. The correction and amendment process is governed in Arizona law by Arizona Revised Statute [§36-323](#) and Arizona Administrative Code [R9-19-114 through R9-19-117 and R9-19-119](#).

The **informant** is the person listed on the death certificate as having provided all of the personal information to whom ever prepared the death certificate. An **immediate family member** is limited to the deceased's mother, father, sister, brother, son or daughter.

Mortuary Error:

If the correction involves an error that was made by the mortuary, the easiest way to have the correction done is to have the mortuary submit a correction letter to the Office of Vital Registration. We will then make the correction at no cost to the family.

Correction of Marital Status and Spouse:

When there is a question of the marital status of the deceased (the death certificate states the deceased was divorced and someone alleges they were married to the deceased at the time of death, or vice versa) the process is somewhat more complicated.

The person alleging to be the deceased's spouse must file a written request for the change along with documentary evidence (a **certified copy** of the marriage certificate) to the Office of Vital Registration. We will then notify the informant of the request and nature of the change being requested. The informant has 14 calendar days from the date the notice is mailed to respond.

If the Office of Vital Registration has not received a response from the informant in the prescribed time, or the informant responds favorably, the correction will then be made to the death certificate.

If the informant responds unfavorably, or disputes the claim, no change will be made to the death certificate until additional documentary evidence is provided (a divorce decree or marriage certificate). In these cases, the State Registrar will determine the sufficiency of the evidence provided. The final alternative is for the

person requesting the change to seek a court order and provide the Office of Vital Registration with a certified copy of that order.

Judicial Changes:

Any changes to death certificates of the following nature shall be judicial changes:

- Amendment of a standard death certificate based on a declaration of death by a court of competent jurisdiction; or
- Revision or alteration of the medical cause or the manner and circumstances of death based on the final determination of a court or a formal inquest.

Judicial changes require a **certified copy** of the judgment, court order or other legal instrument and any additional documents or information necessary to accomplish the desired changes.

Major Administrative Changes:

Changes of the following items are considered major administrative changes:

- Name of the deceased;
- Race or sex of the deceased;
- Date or place of death;
- Marital status or name of the spouse;
- Date or place of birth of the deceased;
- Citizenship status of the deceased;
- Medical cause of death;
- Manner and circumstances of death; or
- Entry in the certification statement of the physician or medical examiner.

Major administrative changes require an affidavit from the person requesting the change and one independent factual document corroborating the information to be corrected. If an independent factual document is not available or the information to be corrected is such that a factual document is not applicable, an affidavit of personal knowledge from a second individual may be substituted. The sufficiency of such affidavit is to be determined by the State Registrar who shall evaluate the accuracy, sufficiency, consistency and veracity of the document. The State Registrar shall decide which type of

document or documents is acceptable in a particular case. For changes on a certificate initiated:

- Within one year from the date of the death, the factual document shall have been established on or before the date of death.
- Between one year and five years from the date of death, the factual document shall have been established at least one year prior to the date offered as evidence.
- Five years or more after the date of death, the factual document shall have been established at least three years prior to the date offered as evidence and shall have been established during the first ten years of the registrant's life.

Minor Administrative Changes:

All other changes of data, including all minor errors of spelling, typographical errors and transposed letters, shall be minor administrative changes.

Minor administrative changes require an [affidavit](#) from the person requesting the change and such other evidence as the State Registrar shall deem necessary to establish the validity of the requested change. For changes requested within one year from the date of death, the affidavit alone is sufficient. For changes after one year, additional evidence is required.

Please Note: We recommend that you contact our office at (602) 506-6805 to make sure that the death record is available at our location.